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AUTHOR Baetens Beardsmore, Hugo
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ABSTRACT

Two experiments, based on the semantic differential technique, were designed to measure the tolerance level of bilingually marked English in a functional bilingual's speech. In the first experiment, marked syntactic cues were rated by different groups of judges as generally indicative of non-bilingualism, although on the whole they were not considered as impairing intelligibility. The marked syntactic cues, when isolated from morphophonemic elements, did not allow for a clear distinction between the functional bilingual and native-speakers using similar non-standard features in monoglot English. In the second experiment centering on the same subject and based on recorded speech, clear gradations were noted in the level of recognition and tolerance level of bilingually marked English. This was generally rejected as not indicative of bilingual competence by other bilinguals, by native-speaker monoglots and by learners of English, even if found to be acceptable and reasonably comprehensible. The results imply an inherent disparity between certain linguistic or widely held definitions of bilingualism that do not correlate with sociolinguistic data and the reality of some types of bilingual cases. (Author/PMJ)

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The Recognition and Tolerance Level of Bilingual Speech

Hugo BAETENS BEARDSMORE
Vrije Universiteit Brussel
Belgium

Much research into listeners' reactions towards marked bilingual speech has been concerned with attitudinal patterns towards the bilingual speakers' personal attributes. Several papers by social psychologists have been devoted to such analyses (d'Anglejan & Tucker, 1973; Giles, 1970; Lambert, Frankel & Tucker, 1960) revealing how marked bilingual speech can lead to positive or negative personality evaluations dependent on the prestige factors associated with the members of a particular ethnic group. Marked speech can also elicit positive or negative personality judgements in the case of monoglot native-speakers who speak non-prestige varieties of a language (Tucker & Lambert, 1969). Nearly all experiments of this nature have been based on the matched-guise technique using recorded readings as stimuli for the judges' assessment, though similar attitudinal reactions towards marked speech have been elicited in an experiment based on uninhibited connected free speech (Rey, 1975).

The experiments referred to above have concentrated on linking marked speech with personality traits in an attempt to reveal how speech can trigger communally shared stereotyped images while failing to look into one crucial factor, namely just how much bilingual marking is tolerated. This paper represents an attempt to rectify this omission by concentrating on a small-scale investigation which it is believed has wide implications. For the student of bilingualism it is important to know whether bilingually marked speech is accepted or rejected by monoglot speakers of one of the languages involved and more significantly whether it is understood or not. Furthermore, it might be supposed that certain speech communities will tolerate marked speech better than others:

> "Certaines communautés tolèrent l'interférence mieux que d'autres. Il se peut que cette tolérance ait des déterminants historiques; mais elle est aussi tributaire de l'analaphabétisme, de la normalisation et des contacts interlinguistiques."(Mackey, 1976,312)

Thus it might well be that monoglot native-speakers, bilinguals and learners of a foreign language all have different tolerance levels with regard to the language that the three groups have in common. Differences in tolerance levels have been investigated in an experiment with a different purpose in mind (Greenbaum, 1976) where linguistic data was tested for acceptability amongst naive judges in order to check on the linguist's introspective rejection of certain syntactic structures.

Experiments on the tolerance level of bilingually marked speech

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should help in the quest for objective criteria in the fixing of goals for language testing as well as furthering our knowledge of the measurement of bilingualism.

To this end a two pronged investigation was carried out, the first part of which will merely be summarised since it has already appeared in print elsewhere (Baetens Beardsmore, 1977). Important for any enquiry into bilingualism is the definition one gives of the bilingual speaker and here there is very little agreement among specialists (cf. Béziers & Van Overbeke, 1968). For our purposes we have chosen what we consider to be a functional bilingual, that is, a speaker who can conduct all his activities in a given non-native linguistic community to the satisfactory accomplishment of those activities. The subject is a woman of 64 who emigrated from Belgium to England at the age of 32 and has lived in Britain ever since. Before residence in Britain she spoke only a Dutch dialect after which she spoke exclusively English once she had mastered the language by untutored learning in her everyday environment. At present all her activities are carried out in English with very little contact with Dutch except during rare holidays. Indeed she might even be considered as dominant in English in that her written and aural comprehension of formal English is now better than that of formal Dutch. Her written production in both languages shows signs of heavy interference while her spoken English reveals more traces of foreign interference than her spoken Dutch, though the latter is not entirely free of lexical and syntactic interference from English.

It could be claimed that the subject represents the non-fluent bilingual which according to some is the more typical case (Segalowitz & Gatbonton, 1977), since the perfectly balanced ambilingual with equal unmarked mastery of two languages is a rarity (Halliday, McIntosh & Strevens, 1970).

Experiment 1

In the first experiment 24 utterances produced by the functional bilingual, all deviant from standard English and marked by varying degrees of interference, were presented in written form to 237 judges made up of three groups: a group of self-styled bilinguals from different linguistic backgrounds but all having English as their common language, i.e. English-Welsh bilinguals, English-German bilinguals, English-French bilinguals and English-Dutch bilinguals - no objective measure had been used to ascertain the degree of bilingualism of these subjects although all had been asked to define what they understood by "bilingual" and all had given balanced, almost equal mastery of two languages as their criteria; the second group consisted of non-bilingual native-speakers of English, while the third group consisted of foreign learners of English studying either in a French- or Dutch-medium university in Belgium (this last group all had some knowledge of Dutch, even though they might be learning English through the medium of French). For purposes of comparison a further 6 utterances produced by monoglot speakers of a regional variety of English containing deviations from the standard English norm were also submitted and the judges were informed that all 30 utterances had been made by different speakers, some of whom knew only English and others who spoke both English and Dutch.

Using the semantic differential technique in which the judges were asked to rate the written stimuli on four seven-point scales representing different degrees of polarity between opposite attributes, responses were measured indicating whether the utterances were felt as 1) revealing the speech of a native-speaker or not, 2) the speech of a bilingual or not, 3) whether they were acceptable or not, and 4) whether they were comprehensible or not. The scales used were as follows :

	3	2	1	0	1	2	3	
Native-speaker	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Non-native-speaker
Bilingual	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Non-bilingual
Acceptable	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Unacceptable
Comprehensible	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Incomprehensible

Results on this test revealed that there was little distinction made between the utterances of the functional bilingual and those of the native-speakers. All were considered by the majority of respondents as representing non-native speech and as more typical of bilingual speech, though with a significantly high score for non-bilinguality, as unacceptable though as overwhelming comprehensible (for further details, cf. Baetens Beardsmore, 1977). The results show a certain ambiguity in the way in which respondents perceived the utterances since although they rejected them as not typical of native-speaker speech they did not consider them as typical of bilingual speech. Perhaps a further scale should have been introduced enquiring whether the judges felt the utterances as typical of some stage in a learner's development, although this was omitted in order to force judges, in as far as possible, to choose between native-speaker and bilingual. The first two scales can be interpreted as mutually exclusive if bilingual competence is felt to be the equivalent of native-speaker competence, and indeed this often tends to be the layman's interpretation (as indicated by the definitions provided by the majority of respondents). However, as has already been indicated above, specialist opinion tends to consider equal native-like mastery of two languages as exceptional rather than typical, thereby justifying our attempt to force respondents to opt for one of the two possibilities offered by the first two scales. The results obtained would tend to confirm the observation that it is

> "difficult to identify certain problems as either non-standard dialect or adult second-language development" (Cohen, 1976, 130)

and corroborate Haugen's (1977) preoccupations with the ambiguity of the concept of "norm", be it in a bilingual or a monoglot community. Haugen tries to distinguish between a bilingual or contact dialect characteristic of bilinguals from a regional or social dialect, but the interesting feature of this first experiment was that the judgement of deviations from the codified norm of standard English tended to be similar for the native-speaker regional utterances and the bilingual utterances.

Although the majority of utterances received fairly negative scores except on the comprehension scale, the results did allow for a rank ordering which showed on the positive side that utterances that were well understood were

Table 1: Rank order of appreciation of utterances on the four scales

a) Functional bilingual utterances	Native-speaker	Bilingual	Acceptable	Comprehensible
1. I didn't took a pill	26	2	26	3
2. She'll has to be careful, you know	21	7	24	13
3. If my feet are flat, it's worser	13	9	21	16
4. Lay down, Nippy, go on, good girl	1	29	1	13
5. If I had been be able to go out I would have more	16	11	17	23
6. They're costing a lot of money	3	5	2	2
7. What time will you coming ?	24	8	22	13
8. I like these cups, and the saucers, they're not sliding out	9	28	10	24
9. I know what I've done that with - that pan putting on out of the oven	25	25	28	30
10. Get the sweetness more out	15	21	19	25
11. That is for the teapot to put on	17	16	16	20
12. What did you had to eat ?	22	13	19	7
13. I remember me this	27	3	23	17
14. Was the one out you street out as well ?	29	26	29	29
15. I like it always a bit stronger	6	4	3	6
16. He has been long enough training	11	1	8	10
17. He seemed to be flippin' well well enough fed	2	30	12	27
18. I didn't had a card from her this year	20	12	14	5
19. Should I have to send a telegram	4	10	5	8
20. When I watch, at nine o'clock news, I lay down in the chair	23	6	17	12
21. What time you get up in the morning ?	7	20	4	1
22. They're really always on the go, isn't it ?	14	18	11	18
23. The one mee zijne lange neus	30	27	30	28
24. Mind you, he has a wife now, to think about, isn't it ?	12	17	13	19

Table 1 (continued)

b) Native-speaker Utterances

25. (London) You'll have to get used to let me doing it	5	19	6	9
26. (Hampshire) Her never answered I	28	23	27	22
27. (Leicestershire) I mean, you think, when you're going to be throwed out of your house	19	22	15	21
28. (Norfolk) Never let your left hand know what your right hand do	10	14	9	10
29. (Bristol) I never knew what a egg was	8	15	7	4
30. (West Midlands) If a woman let it in it was the worsest of bad luck	18	24	25	26

(For a detailed discussion of the above cues, cf. Paetens Beardsmore, 1977.)

well accepted and more readily indicative of native speaker ability but not necessarily indicative of bilingual speech. On the other hand, the utterances with the lowest scores tended to correlate on all four scales, i.e. were unacceptable, incomprehensible, non-native-like and not considered as representative of bilingual skill. Table 1 indicates the acceptance level of each utterance on the four scales for the total group of judges not sub-divided into groups and provides useful information for the foreign language tester as to which type of deviation from the codified norm is most likely to cause disruptive communication.

Insert Table 1

From the rank order of responses to the four scales it can be seen that the first four items to be considered as indicative of native-speaker ability all came from the functional bilingual, as did the most acceptable and the most comprehensible. Also, the judges considered the most native-like and acceptable item (no. 4) as one of the least typical for bilingual speech. Surprisingly, two of the monoglot utterances (items 26 and 30) were rated fairly low on all four scales, indicating a high level of rejection.

Experiment 2

Although the first experiment described above provides useful information for testing purposes on the nature of morphosyntactic elements that can be tolerated, it does not really measure bilingualism since it lacks the spoken facet which is primordial in communication. To remedy this defect a second experiment was designed using recorded material. This time four subjects were used, each providing a recorded reading of the same short passage of narrative prose together with an extract of uninhibited connected speech relating a recent trip to the countryside or a holiday. The eight recordings provided by the four speakers were then presented in random order for judges to rate on the same four seven-point scales as in the previous experiment. Along with the functional bilingual from experiment 1 the other three speakers were a female monoglot speaker of English from the same area in Britain as the functional bilingual, a male university assistant teaching English at a Belgian university with Dutch and French as his first languages, and a first year Dutch-speaking undergraduate learning English at a Belgian university. Judges were 93 subjects broken down as in experiment 1 into groupings consisting of 17 self-styled bilinguals (English-Welsh, English-Dutch), 46 native-speakers of English who did not consider themselves as bilingual even though they all had knowledge of at least one foreign language, and 30 Dutch mother-tongue learners of English. All judges were university undergraduates either in the department of modern languages in a British university or the department of English of a Belgian university. Tables 2 and 3 give the results on this test per extract of recorded material for the three groups of judges. Results have been globalised into positive,

Table 2. Judges	Native Speaker	Non-Native Speaker	Undecided	Bilingual	Non-Bilingual	Undecided	
							Female Functional Bilingual
Bilinguals	5.9	94.1	0.0	64.6	29.4	5.9	Reading
English Speakers	0.0	100.0	0.0	23.9	73.9	2.2	
Learners	20.0	80.0	0.0	46.6	50.0	3.3	
Bilinguals	29.5	64.8	5.9	47.0	35.3	17.6	Free Speech
English Speakers	8.7	80.3	10.9	43.5	41.3	15.2	
Learners	46.6	46.7	6.7	46.7	39.9	13.3	
Bilinguals	64.7	35.3	0.0	58.8	29.4	11.8	Female Native Speaker
English Speakers	100.0	0.0	0.0	6.6	34.8	58.7	Reading
Learners	46.7	53.4	0.0	53.4	26.7	20.0	
Bilinguals	88.3	5.9	5.9	0.0	47.1	52.9	
English Speakers	100.0	0.0	0.0	6.5	15.2	78.3	Free Speech
Learners	96.7	3.3	0.0	6.7	56.6	36.7	
Bilinguals	53.0	47.0	0.0	47.1	11.8	41.2	Male University Assistant
English Speakers	6.5	93.4	0.0	91.3	6.5	2.2	Reading
Learners	63.4	23.3	13.3	36.7	30.0	33.3	
Bilinguals	35.3	64.7	0.0	70.6	11.8	17.6	
English Speakers	0.0	100.0	0.0	93.4	6.5	0.0	Free Speech
Learners	30.0	66.7	3.3	70.0	20.0	10.0	
Bilinguals	0.0	100.0	0.0	76.4	11.8	11.8	Male Undergraduate Learner
English Speakers	0.0	100.0	0.0	50.0	45.6	4.3	Reading
Learners	3.3	96.7	0.0	53.3	40.0	6.7	
Bilinguals	0.0	100.0	0.0	76.4	17.7	5.9	
English Speakers	0.0	100.0	0.0	47.8	47.8	4.3	Free Speech
Learners	0.0	100.0	0.0	56.6	40.0	3.3	

Table 3. Judges	Acceptable	Unacceptable	Undecided	Comprehensible	Incomprehensible	Undecided	Female Functional Bilingual
Bilinguals	41.1	58.8	0.0	64.8	35.3	0.0	Reading
English Speakers	52.1	43.5	4.3	58.7	36.9	4.3	
Learners	43.3	53.4	3.3	53.3	36.6	10.0	
Bilinguals	64.6	35.3	0.0	64.6	35.3	0.0	Free Speech
English Speakers	58.7	34.8	6.5	71.7	26.1	2.2	
Learners	66.7	26.7	6.7	66.6	33.4	0.0	
Bilinguals	94.2	5.9	0.0	94.1	5.9	0.0	Female Native Speaker
English Speakers	95.6	2.2	2.2	100.0	0.0	0.0	Reading
Learners	89.9	6.7	3.3	83.4	13.3	3.3	
Bilinguals	100.0	0.0	0.0	94.2	5.9	0.0	Free Speech
English Speakers	97.8	2.2	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	
Learners	96.7	3.3	0.0	90.0	10.0	0.0	
Bilinguals	94.2	5.9	0.0	94.1	5.9	0.0	Male University Assistant
English Speakers	100.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	
Learners	100.0	0.0	0.0	96.6	3.3	0.0	Reading
Bilinguals	100.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	Free Speech
English Speakers	100.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	
Learners	100.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	
Bilinguals	88.3	11.8	0.0	94.2	5.9	0.0	Male Undergraduate Learner
English Speakers	89.1	2.2	8.7	100.0	0.0	0.0	
Learners	76.7	10.0	13.3	96.7	0.0	3.3	Reading
Bilinguals	70.7	17.7	11.8	94.1	5.9	0.0	Free Speech
English Speakers	76.1	10.9	13.0	89.2	4.3	6.5	
Learners	83.3	10.0	6.7	96.7	3.3	0.0	

negative, or neutral scores for the sake of simplicity and are expressed in percentages.

Insert Tables 2 & 3

Results on this test tend to corroborate the affirmation that different speech communities will tolerate interference better than others. As could be expected the native-speakers were the most accurate in detecting native-speaker ability, achieving 100% scores on this task. They were also the most severe in rejecting our functional bilingual as a native-speaker, since on the uninhibited speech task only 8.7% of these judges thought she might be a native-speaker. It is significant though that on the judgement of uninhibited connected speech she did obtain even this relatively low score whereas on the same task the university assistant was definitely rejected with 0%. If we carefully compare the two recordings of the functional bilingual and the university assistant on the uninhibited speech task we can note that the latter's English was much nearer the standard norm of British RP in phonology, syntax and lexis than that of the functional bilingual; one might wonder whether there was something else in the functional bilingual's speech that made it marginally more native-like. This something else could not be on the phonological level since the speaker had many striking non-native-like features in her speech, including the replacement of dental fricatives / ʃ θ / by dentals / d t / and the replacement of the voiced palatal / g / by its Dutch counterpart, an aspirated / ɣ / .Such striking characteristics were absent from the assistant's speech. On the syntactic level too, there were striking deviations from the norm of standard English, particularly in the use of the verb, e.g. "I tried to fed the blue peacock","when he find out I had nothing". It is not clear how one can account for the difference in appreciation between the ratings on the two subjects and perhaps further, more refined experimentation could bring this to light. It might well be that the university assistant's speech was more indicative of the performance of a careful foreign speaker than the slightly more confused syntax of the functional bilingual. The following transcriptions illustrate the differences between the two speakers.

Functional bilingual

"We decided yesterday to have a ride out and we chose to go to Hagley Hall, which is very old, er, what got to say it, aristocratic building. I find it very nice and beautiful, and special the furniture and the china and the silver; I was really surprised. I could have stayed there all day. But when we decided then to have a cup of tea, in the place, which were the kitchens of the former staff in those days. It was very, very clean and beautiful and after all very cheap.We had a pot of tea for two, where I had three cups of tea and the other one three as well. There were a lot of milk and sugar, and very cheap.For the two we paid a pound, which was really out of all proportion when you go out for a cup of tea to drink, on the road or, the motorway. We sat there peacefully - I really didn't want to go away. When we came out, I saw some

lovely peacocks, a lovely blue, and a real white one, which was the oldest out the lot. I tried to fed the blue peacock but I had nothing in my hand. And he came to me, but when he find out I had nothing he walked off, or she, and a girl who saw it walking away from me, brought a tit-bit, and the bird came back.Then we went to see the lake and the grounds round it. I would have loved to go on the boats there, but, er, that was out of all proportion in my condition, so, we had to be satisfied mee (= Dutch "with") just walking and seeing all the beauty."

University Assistant

"Well, we decided to spend our summer holiday in Switzerland where some members of the family lent us a chalet, er, which was way out in the mountains about a quarter of an hour from any road. We took the two children, it was quite a journey, I must say, er, with all the toys and everything, the whole household to be, to be moved. The most outstanding fact of the holiday, unfortunately, was the fact that I had to go to the hospital with an acute case of appendicitis.....er.... Swiss hospitals are quite nice but one doesn't like to spend one's holiday in the hospital, of course."

If we turn to the bilingual scale for the functional bilingual's sample of speech we note that the native-speakers of English judged it more severely than the other groups, giving it a low score of bilinguality, 43.5%. On the other hand, the university assistant's free speech was given a very high rating by this group, 93.4%, considering it as indicative of bilingual speech. On the acceptability and comprehension scales native-speakers gave the university assistant 100% scores whereas the functional bilingual got only 58.7% for acceptability and 71.1% for comprehension.

The self-styled bilinguals were more ready to consider the functional bilingual as a native-speaker on this extract, with 29.5% doing so, but still two thirds of them rejected it as non-native-like. Less than half considered it as representing bilingual speech (47%), while more than half found it acceptable (64.6%), and comprehensible (64.6%). The same group of judges gave the university assistant 100% for acceptability and comprehension. It was the group of learners of English who were the least accurate in detecting the non-native-like quality of the functional bilingual's uninhibited speech, though on the bilingual, acceptability and comprehension scales they were similar in their ratings to the self-styled bilinguals.

It is to be noted that of the four subjects it was the functional bilingual who came out worst on the reading task on all the scales except that of native-speaker quality, and even here the scores were very low. This could be explained by the artificiality of asking someone to read a passage aloud and might call into question the value of experiments based solely on such a technique since few speakers are ever expected to read aloud once they have left school. It should not be surprising that an inexperienced reader gives an unsatisfactory rendering of a passage if it is a completely alien experience. On the other hand, although there are significant differences in the detailed scores on the reading task when compared to uninhibited speech, the overall picture given by a comparison of the two sets of scores does not alter the interpretation of results in a decisive manner.

The exact parallelism in scores on the reading task for the native-speaker monoglot and the university assistant as rated by the bilingual judges is striking and provides perhaps a further argument against experimentation of this nature based solely on reading stimuli.

If one concentrates on the overall scores for the four speakers on the uninhibited speech task it can be seen that the native-speaker subject is overwhelmingly recognised as such by the three groups of judges (88.3% of the bilinguals, 100% of the native-speakers and 96.7% of the learners), and is overwhelmingly correctly assessed as not being a bilingual (0% for the bilingual judges, 6.5% for the native-speakers and 6.7% for the learners), leading to the interpretation that the native-speaker and bilingual scales were considered as mutually exclusive. The same subject's speech is well accepted (by 100% of the bilinguals, 97.8% of the native-speakers and 96.7% of the learners) and is well understood (by 94.2% of the bilinguals, 100% of the native-speakers and 90% of the learners). The functional bilingual achieves a score similar to the university assistant on the native-speaker scale, even though this is fairly low in both cases (the bilingual judges giving respectively scores of 29.5% and 35.3%, the native-speakers 8.7% and 0.0%, and the learners 46.6% and 30.0%). On the other hand, on the bilingual scale the functional bilingual comes off worst with less than 50% of the three groups of judges considering her to be a bilingual. Similarly, on the acceptability and comprehension scales she scores the lowest of the three (for acceptability, 54.6% for the bilingual raters, 58.7% for the native-speakers and 66.7% for the learners, and for comprehension, 64.6% for the bilinguals, 71.7% for the native-speakers and 66.6% for the learners), though here more than 50% of each group rated her positively.

These results have significant implications for the measurement of bilingualism. The external factors of her case history indicate that the subject fits our definition of a functional bilingual. Nevertheless, the nature of her bilingualism is such that it does not satisfy the standards of the three groups of judges, even though the majority of them found her English acceptable and comprehensible. What the experiment has provided, then, is a measure for degree of bilingualism ranging from very high for the university assistant, lower for the undergraduate student and lower still for the functional bilingual. On the other hand her speech is considered as slightly more native-like than that of the other two subjects, though only marginally so. Perhaps the cut-off point where one could say that a speaker is not at all a bilingual could be measured not by the bilingual scale but by the combined acceptability and comprehension scales. Although we encounter the same gradation for these two scales for all three speakers our functional bilingual still rates reasonably well. This experiment perhaps allows us to define bilingualism as starting at a point where the majority of interlocutors accept and understand the speaker's language efforts. This socially determined definition has the advantage over theoretical definitions in that it is realistic and measurable. Haugen states that bilingualism begins

> "at the point where the speaker can produce meaningful utterances in the other language" (1956, 10)

but this could be called into question. I may be able to say "buenas noches" while on holiday in Spain, which is a complete meaningful utterance,

without being capable of going any further in Spanish. Rather than stating that this is the starting point of my Spanish-English bilingualism I would prefer to consider it as the starting point of conscious code-switching. The measurements provided by the experiment outlined above do allow for a definition of bilingualism which would take as its starting point the consideration that

> "parler correctement, c'est parler à la satisfaction de son entourage immédiat". (Béziers & Van Overbeke, 1968, 47).

Note

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